



City of Seattle
Office of the Mayor

Date August 13, 2010

To Citizen Review Panel

Subject Discussion on Housing and Services for Seattle's Unsheltered Homeless Population

The 2010 One Night Count of people without shelter found 1,986 people sleeping outside in Seattle. People were counted on benches, in cars, under roadways and in tents or other structures. While the City of Seattle funds 1,209 shelter beds for individuals and families, conventional shelters are often full or pose challenges (e.g., hours of operation, gender separated) that some homeless people prefer to avoid by sleeping outside.

At the same time, City of Seattle resources are strained to an historic degree. The city's General Fund took cuts of more than \$12 million in 2010, and faces almost \$60 million in cuts for 2011, making the preservation of existing services a considerable challenge. Creative thinking is needed from all stakeholders to address ways to support homeless individuals and families during times of limited resources and increasing need.

This group has been convened to provide the Mayor's Office and City Council with recommendations that are sensitive to the changing economic climate and the city's ongoing budget realities. Specifically:

1. Should an encampment be established on a piece of city property for some determined period of time? Such an outcome would require a third party to be contracted to manage the encampment and meet specific criteria around use of the space and services provided, as established by the city. Potential criteria include neighborhood notification, background checks, co-location of or referral to services with the goal of moving people permanently out of homelessness, and the collection of demographic and other data demonstrating progress towards that outcome.
2. Can the current funding, policy, and regulatory environment support a suitable range of low-cost housing options (such as single room occupancy units) for the unsheltered population? If not, how could it change to do so?
3. What existing services are most relevant to the population in question? What can be done to support or expand those services?
4. Are there other models that could complement existing services and serve the unsheltered population?